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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature suggests that student evaluations, contrary to popular belief, can be valid sources of data about teaching performance when care is taken in the planning and administration of the evaluation procedure. This study sought to determine if a difference is made in the assessment of teacher competence when student evaluation data are added to supervisor evaluations. Fifty-one elementary, middle, junior high, and high school principals were asked to evaluate seven teachers. One-third of the principals were given only school district summative evaluation data. The other two-thirds were given summative evaluation data as well as student evaluations. Findings indicate that student evaluation data do not significantly alter the assessment of teacher competency. The majority of principals perceive student evaluation data as less reliable than supervisory ratings, even though those ratings might be based on a limited sample of teacher behavior. If the teacher evaluation process is to move forward, a variety of data sources, including student evaluations, should be added to the traditional classroom observation. Appended are a table, 14 references, and an appendix consisting of (1) sample school district teacher evaluation forms, (2) a sample teacher fact sheet, and (3) samples of student evaluation forms. (IW)

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THE USE OF STUDENT EVALUATION IN THE ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER COMPETENCE

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THE USE OF STUDENT EVALUATION IN THE ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER COMPETENCE

INTRODUCTION

Concern about teacher competence has led to increased attention to the teacher evaluation process. School districts are looking for the most effective ways of evaluating their teachers so that a fair, consistent, and informative process evolves -- one that satisfies teachers as well as legal mandates.

Most teacher evaluation systems are based on two or three discrete classroom visits by an appraiser or instructional supervisor. Because the visits can be very time-consuming, many evaluators find it difficult to devote the time needed to conduct them, as well as the pre- and post- conferences necessary for success, properly. As a result, these systems have limited validity. Several authorities (McGreal, 1983; Savage, 1982; Madgic, 1980) advocate the use of a portfolio containing a number of documents as one useful way of providing a more reliable and valid data sample for assessing teacher competence. However, research is needed to determine what impact, if any, the additional sources of data have on the assessment of teacher competence. One document which might be included is student evaluations of the teacher. Research indicates that these evaluations can be an important addition to the evaluation process. After all, the students, who see the teacher every day, are in a position to make more reliable judgments that someone who visits the classroom only twice a year.

Even though much of the research on student evaluation of

teachers has been conducted at the college and university level, the results of this research, when extrapolated to the public school setting, can make student ratings a viable data source for both formative and summative evaluations. Unfortunately, most teachers have a tendency to distrust the student's ability to accurately evaluate teaching performance. McGreal (1983) suggests that "the major ingredient for the successful use of student evaluation is the acceptance of the idea that students are much more reliable in describing life in the classroom than they are in making evaluative judgments of the teacher " (p. 134).

The use of student evaluations, according to Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983), assumes (1) that the student knows when he has been motivated, (2) that it is the student whose behavior will be changed, (3) that student rating is feedback to the teacher, and (4) that student recognition may motivate good teaching. Since students are the main source of information about the accomplishment of educational goals, rapport between students and teacher, communication, and problems which exist between students and teacher, the students' perception of these can serve in both a formative and summative manner (Aleamoni, 1981).

Research indicates that student evaluations are valid and reliable. They are not, as some suggest, popularity contests. Aleamoni (1981)reports research by Guthrie (1924) which showed that students can make consistent judgments. Guthrie found that the stability of student ratings from one year to the next resulted in correlations in the range of .87 to .89. More

recently other researchers (Costin, et al.,1971; Gillmore, 1973; Hogan, 1973) found the correlation between student ratings of the same instructors and courses ranged from .70 to .87.

One professional instrument which has proved quite reliable is the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire (CEQ), an instrument composed of five subscales: Instructor, General Attitude, Method of Instruction, Course Content, and Interest and Attention. Aleamoni and Spencer (1973) conducted research in schools which had used the CEQ and found that results on no single subscale completely overlapped the other. This seems to indicate that students can be discriminating judges when rating their teachers. The reliability of the CEQ ranged from .81 to .94 for items and from .88 to .98 for subscales (Aleamoni, 1981).

Validity of student evaluations is more difficult to assess. Aleamoni (1981) suggests that the best evidence comes from comparing student ratings with other indicators such as colleague rating, expert judges' ratings, alumni ratings, and measures of student learning. In fact, some researchers (ie. Drucker & Remmers, 1951; Aleamoni & Yimer, 1973; Marsh & Overall, 1979) have found that alumni who have been out of school for 5 to 10 years rated their instructors about the same as did students currently enrolled.

If student evaluations are used, Macdonald (1979) says it is best to have students evaluate only interactive aspects of teaching, not formative or proactive aspects such as planning. Savage (1982) cautions that proper interpretation requires use of only their mean response. He also lists several other points

which should be considered. First, students must understand the vocabulary. Unless they know what is being asked of them, they cannot make responsible replies. Second, timing is critical. It is not advisable to ask students to complete evaluations immediately after a test or late on a Friday afternoon. Finally, students should be given the option of completing the evaluations anonymously.

Aleamoni (1981) warns that student evaluation forms must be professionally constructed. Otherwise reliability may be so low as to invalidate the evaluative effect. In addition to the CEQ already noted, McGreal (1983) lists three established instruments which offer good descriptive statements:

1. Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) -- Anderson, 1973
2. My Class Inventory -- Anderson, 1973; Maguire, Goetz, Manos, 1972
3. Class Activities Questionnaire -- Walberg, House, Steele, 1973

By making these instruments available to their teachers, administrators should be able to collect more reliable data than if teachers construct their own instrument.

While research, especially in public schools, is still needed, it seems that most researchers agree that collecting information from students can be an important source of data about what goes on in the classroom. According to Macdonald (1979), student evaluations can be used with students of almost any age -- from fourth grade through college. With the younger students, this information can be collected through interviews or reaction sheets. Savage (1982) lists other advantages: they can

be collected quickly and at a time convenient to all participants; the information can be collected on machine-scored rating forms; and the data cannot be characterized by teachers as being unrepresentative. While perhaps the best use of student evaluations is still for formative purposes, they can be useful for summative purposes as well, especially when combined with other sources of data.

OBJECTIVE

This study addresses the issue of the impact of additional sources of data on principals' assessment of teacher competency. Specifically, the study addresses the question: . What is the difference in assessment of teacher competence when student evaluation data is added to supervisor evaluations?

METHODS

Sample. A group of 51 principals participating in a summer institute constituted the sample used in the study. The sample included elementary, middle school, junior high and high school principals from urban, suburban and rural schools across the state of Texas. Prior to the experiment, the sample had been given no input in the institute regarding the variables to be considered in teacher evaluation.

Instruments. Summative evaluations of seven secondary teachers were provided to all participants. These evaluations were reported on a teacher evaluation form used by a suburban school district (See Appendix). This form used a five point rating scale for 49 specific indicators covering nine categories. None of the participants in the study were administrators in the district that provided the summative evaluations. In addition, a

data sheet on each teacher (see Appendix) covering items such as experience and prior training was provided to each participant.

Student evaluation forms were constructed by selecting items from several student evaluation forms currently in use. A total of fifteen items was included on the student evaluation form. The data were reported as the percentage of students who rated the teacher on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for each of the fifteen items.

Two categories of student evaluations were then developed. One category consisted of student evaluations that would be classified as high. The second category consisted of student evaluations that would be classified as low.

In order to control for the possibility that individuals might emphasize some items over others, the values for specific items were rotated throughout the instruments in each of the two categories. As a result, within each category of student evaluation instruments, different items were assigned high or low ratings while keeping the total evaluation profile as either high or low.

Procedure. Data sets were developed for each of the principals to use in ranking the teachers from one to seven. One third of the principals were given only the school district summative evaluation data. The other two thirds were given the school district summative evaluation data as well as the student evaluations. Each of the seven teachers was paired one third of the time with a high student evaluation and one third of the time with a low student evaluation.

After reviewing all data, the principals were asked to rank the teachers from one to seven. They were also asked to list those items they considered most important and those considered least important in making their decisions.

An analysis of variance was used to compare the ratings among the three conditions: without student evaluations, with low student evaluations and with high student evaluations.

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the average rankings for each of the seven teachers in each of the three conditions. This table reveals that there was a considerable amount of consistency across the three conditions. Most of the average rankings changed less than one rank across all conditions.

The Friedman Test (Loftus & Loftus, 1982), an analysis of variance for rank orders, was used to analyze the data. This analysis allows for a comparison between the ratings given under each of the three conditions. No significant difference among the three conditions was found at the .05 level.

An analysis of the lists of most important and least important items used by the principals in making the rating decision indicated that of those principals who were provided the student evaluation data, thirteen listed the student evaluations as one of the most important sources of data. However, thirteen principals from this same group indicated that student evaluation data was one of the least important data sources. The summative evaluation was listed most frequently as the data source having the most impact on the principals' decisions.

Those who were not provided with student evaluation data

listed the summative evaluation as the most important data followed by the academic preparation of the teacher, effective communication skills, and teaching strategies. The academic preparation was indicated on the data sheet provided for each teacher, and the communication and teaching strategies were components of the summative evaluation.

DISCUSSION

The findings seem to indicate that student evaluation data does not significantly alter the assessment of teacher competency. The comments provided by the raters seem to indicate that the majority of the principals in the study do not perceive student evaluation data as a valuable source of information. They place more confidence in the ratings of a supervisor even though that rating might be based on a limited sample of teaching behavior.

If student evaluation is a valid source of data about teaching performance, and a review of the literature suggests that it is, then a great deal of education is needed to convince school administrators of the validity of student evaluations. Unless this task is undertaken, current trends to include a portfolio of information in the assessment of teaching performance will result in more paper work with no discernable effect on the evaluation.

Additional studies need to be conducted to determine if other sources of data about teaching, such as teacher plans and other artifacts of the teaching process, do impact the decisions that are made about teaching competence. Perhaps there are other

sources of data that are more credible to the school administrator.

Another variable that might be studied relates to the specificity of the summative evaluation instrument. Instruments that are well defined and relatively low inference might be viewed as more credible by school administrators and given more weight when compared to other sources of data. However, very high inference summative evaluation forms might lead to a greater reliance on student evaluations and other sources of information about teacher performance.

The number of classroom visits and the length of the observations used in arriving at the summative evaluation might also be an important consideration. In the present study the principals in the group assummed that the summative evaluation data was based on at least two observations of at least forty-five minutes in length since those are state requirements The group also inferred that the summative evaluation was conducted by the school principal since this is also a state requirement. It might be interesting to note how the confidence in the summative evaluation would change if it were reported that the data was based on more or fewer observations and the appraisal was conducted by someone other than the building principal.

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited in that the sample was not randomly selected. Those included were principals who had elected to attend a summer institute and therefore they may not be representative of the total population of school principals. In addition, the sample involved administrators from only one state,

Texas. The participants had just completed a year filled with turmoil regarding the implementation of an education reform bill. The experiences of the past year as well as concern about certain provisions of the reform legislation relating to teacher evaluation and career ladders could have colored the decisions of the sample of school administrators. It would be helpful to replicate the study in other states where the concerns of school administrators might be different.

CONCLUSION

Although research tends to verify the importance of student evaluation in the assessment of teacher competence, this study indicates that it is apparently not viewed that way by school principals. If the teacher evaluation process is to move forward, research indicates that a variety of data sources, including student evaluations, should be added to the traditional classroom observation. However, unless teachers and evaluators are convinced of the importance of this additional data, it will be of little use in the total evaluation process.

TABLE 1

Average Rating for Each Teacher in Each Condition

	Supervisor Rating Only	Supervisor Rating, Low Student Evaluation	Supervisor Rating, High Student Evaluation
Teacher 1	2.57 (1)	2.70 (2)	2.82 (3)
Teacher 2	4.04 (1)	4.77 (2)	4.93 (3)
Teacher 3	5.61 (3)	4.55 (2)	3.93 (1)
Teacher 4	4.23 (3)	4.18 (2)	4.11 (1)
Teacher 5	1.42 (1)	1.93 (3)	1.83 (2)
Teacher 6	6.00 (1)	6.29 (3)	6.00 (1)
Teacher 7	4.09 (2)	4.41 (3)	3.52 (1)

The numbers in the table are the average of the rakings for each teacher with one the highest ranking and seven the lowest. The numbers in parentheses are the ranks of each teacher across the treatments.

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APPENDIX

Katy Independent School District

Teacher Evaluation

Check appropriate blank

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
	✓			
		✓		
			✓	
			✓	
			✓	
			✓	
			✓	
			✓	
			✓	

I. Human Qualities

1. Exhibits concern for others through demonstration of empathy, warmth, and courtesy
2. Exhibits positive attitude and enthusiasm
3. Exhibits sense of humor
4. Exhibits flexibility
5. Exhibits diplomacy and tact

II. Effective Communication Skills

1. Demonstrates appropriate use of English language
2. Demonstrates clarity of written and oral expression
3. Demonstrates correct spelling
4. Demonstrates active listening with observable action

III. Academic and Professional Preparation

1. Demonstrates competency in subject matter
2. Demonstrates knowledge of human growth and development by exhibiting appropriate expectations for age, grade, and abilities of students
3. Demonstrates evidence of growth in profession

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
		✓		
		✓		

Teacher receiving highest supervisor's rating

IV. Planning and Organizational Skills

1. Exhibits evidence of lesson objectives
2. Exhibits objective-oriented learning activities
3. Exhibits legible long and short-range written plans
4. Maintains adequate and appropriate plans for substitutes
5. Maintains a supportive record system
6. Exhibits classroom activities which reflect organized preparation
7. Exhibits conservation of time and resources

V. Teaching Strategies and Techniques

1. Utilizes various techniques for different learning styles recognizing individual differences and needs
2. Utilizes a variety of learning materials and experiences which maintain interest
3. Incorporates use of library facilities in learning experiences
4. Utilizes good judgement in the assignment of reasonable reinforcement activities

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
✓				
✓				
✓				
		✓		
	✓			
✓				
✓				

VI. Skill in Student Evaluation

1. Exhibits expectations appropriate for level of students
2. Exhibits accurate evaluations which reflect student progress
3. Exhibits adequate basis for assignment of any grade or evaluation document
4. Exhibits evaluation techniques which are fair, uniform, and consistent
5. Exhibits prompt return of evaluated work to students
6. Exhibits appropriate communication to parents concerning student progress

VII. Classroom Management Skills

1. Begins class in an efficient, business-like manner
2. Carries out administrative details promptly and accurately
3. Maintains a neat and attractive educational environment
4. Maintains an atmosphere in which students are in control of their behavior and demonstrate self-discipline and responsibility
5. Uses strategies and techniques for dealing with disruptive behavior which are appropriate, positive, and constructive
6. Establishes clear limits of behavior

Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	

VIII. Professional Attitude

1. Participates actively in and demonstrates support for teams, departments and faculty planning and decisions
2. Upholds and enforces board policies, administrative regulations, and school rules
3. Works cooperatively with administrators, colleagues, and public
4. Recognizes, accepts, and carries out additional responsibilities
5. Treats all confidential information in a professional manner
6. Accepts and acts upon constructive criticism in a professional manner
7. Establishes and maintains appropriate teacher-student relationships

IX. Personal Characteristics

1. Exhibits integrity
2. Exhibits emotional stability and maturity
3. Exhibits dependability
4. Maintains punctuality
5. Exhibits appropriate dress and appearance
6. Maintains good general health
7. Provides acceptable role model

Katy Independent School District

Teacher Evaluation

Check appropriate blank

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory		
	✓				I.	**Human Qualities**
	✓				1.	Exhibits concern for others through demonstration of empathy, warmth, and courtesy
		✓			2.	Exhibits positive attitude and enthusiasm
	✓				3.	Exhibits sense of humor
		✓			4.	Exhibits flexibility
	✓				5.	Exhibits diplomacy and tact
		✓			II.	**Effective Communication Skills**
		✓			1.	Demonstrates appropriate use of English language
		✓			2.	Demonstrates clarity of written and oral expression
		✓			3.	Demonstrates correct spelling
			✓		4.	Demonstrates active listening with observable action
		✓			III.	**Academic and Professional Preparation**
		✓			1.	Demonstrates competency in subject matter
		✓			2.	Demonstrates knowledge of human growth and development by exhibiting appropriate expectations for age, grade, and abilities of students
	✓				3.	Demonstrates evidence of growth in profession

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory		
		✓			IV.	**Planning and Organizational Skills**
		✓			1.	Exhibits evidence of lesson objectives
		✓			2.	Exhibits objective-oriented learning activities
	✓				3.	Exhibits legible long and short-range written plans
		✓			4.	Maintains adequate and appropriate plans for substitutes
			✓		5.	Maintains a supportive record system
		✓			6.	Exhibits classroom activities which reflect organized preparation
		✓			7.	Exhibits conservation of time and resources
	✓				V.	**Teaching Strategies and Techniques**
		✓			1.	Utilizes various techniques for different learning styles recognizing individual differences and needs
	✓				2.	Utilizes a variety of learning materials and experiences which maintain interest
	✓				3.	Incorporates use of library facilities in learning experiences
	✓				4.	Utilizes good judgement in the assignment of reasonable reinforcement activities

Teacher receiving lowest supervisor's rating

Clearly Outstanding	Exceeding Expectations	Satisfactory	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
	✓			
		✓		
	✓			
		✓		
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
			✓	
		✓		
	✓			
		✓		
		✓		
		✓		
		✓		

VI. Skill in Student Evaluation

1. Exhibits expectations appropriate for level of students
2. Exhibits accurate evaluations which reflect student progress
3. Exhibits adequate basis for assignment of any grade or evaluation document
4. Exhibits evaluation techniques which are fair, uniform, and consistent
5. Exhibits prompt return of evaluated work to students
6. Exhibits appropriate communication to parents concerning student progress

VII. Classroom Management Skills

1. Begins class in an efficient, business-like manner
2. Carries out administrative details promptly and accurately
3. Maintains a neat and attractive educational environment
4. Maintains an atmosphere in which students are in control of their behavior and demonstrate self-discipline and responsibility
5. Uses strategies and techniques for dealing with disruptive behavior which are appropriate, positive, and constructive
6. Establishes clear limits of behavior

Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
✓	
✓	
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VIII. Professional Attitude

1. Participates actively in and demonstrates support for teams, departments, and faculty planning and decisions
2. Upholds and enforces board policies, administrative regulations, and school rules
3. Works cooperatively with administrators, colleagues, and public
4. Recognizes, accepts, and carries out additional responsibilities
5. Treats all confidential information in a professional manner
6. Accepts and acts upon constructive criticism in a professional manner
7. Establishes and maintains appropriate teacher-student relationships

IX. Personal Characteristics

1. Exhibits integrity
2. Exhibits emotional stability and maturity
3. Exhibits dependability
4. Maintains punctuality
5. Exhibits appropriate dress and appearance
6. Maintains good general health
7. Provides acceptable role model

FACT SHEET: Don Clanton

Band Director

Number of years prior to '84-'85 on campus 3

Numbers in ISD 3

Total years experience 14

A. Bachelor's and 3 years

B. Certificate - Yes 1971

C. Evaluations - Yes 15 points

D. Academic training and preparation

3. Bachelor's degree and a combination

College Hours

Mus 671 - Conducting Techniques	Texas Tech 1973		3

Advanced Academic Training

Flag Comp - Johnny Bankston	7-12-83	Band	45
TMEA Convention, San Antonio	8-283-82	Band	27
Curriculum Writing Fred Patek	8-23 -- 8-25-82	Band	24

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The following is a summary of student responses to the questions included on the student questionnaire. The responses are recorded in percentages corresponding to the following key.

A-STRONGLY AGREE B-AGREE C-UNDECIDED
D-DISAGREE E-STRONGLY DISAGREE

1. My teacher listens to me and uses my ideas.
   A-12.5 B-37.5 C-4.2 D-45.8 E-0

2. My teacher gives clear directions and explanations.
   A-16.7 B-58.3 C-16.7 D-8.3 E-0

3. My teacher is fair when students misbehave.
   A-26.7 B-50.0 C-16.7 D-3.3 E-3.3

4. My teacher keeps me interested in my school work.
   A-27.3 B-22.7 C-9.1 D-40.9 E-0

5. My teacher does things to keep the students well-behaved.
   A-9.1 B-45.5 C-31.8 D-13.6 E-0

6. My teacher tells us why the things we are learning are important.
   A-6.7 B-30.0 C-36.7 D-20.0 E-6.7

7. My teacher explains things again if we don't understand.
   A-18.2 B-50.0 C-13.6 D-18.2 E-0

8. My teacher knows a lot about what is taught in class.
   A-25.0 B-45.8 C-16.7 D-8.3 E-4.2

9. My teacher enjoys teaching.
   A-29.0 B-45.2 C-16.1 D-9.7 E-0

10. My teacher teaches things in an order that makes sense.
    A-4.2 B-54.2 C-8.3 D-29.2 E-4.2

11. My teacher is usually well prepared for class.
    A-9.1 B-63.3 C-27.6 D-0 E-0

12. My teacher is friendly.
    A-50.0 B-40.0 C-0 D-8.0 E-2.0

13. My teacher grades assignments and test fairly.
    A-37.5 B-37.5 C-12.5 D-8.3 E-0

14. My teacher gives fair tests.
    A-4.3 B-52.2 C-39.1 D-4.3 E-0

15. My teacher tells me when I do good work.
    A-27.3 B-63.6 C-0 D-9.1 E-0

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The following is a summary of student responses to the questions included on the student questionnaire. The responses are recorded in percentages corresponding to the following key.

A-STRONGLY AGREE B-AGREE C-UNDECIDED
D-DISAGREE E-STRONGLY DISAGREE

1. My teacher listens to me and uses my ideas.
   A-63.6 B-18.2 C-9.1 D-9.1 E-0

2. My teacher gives clear directions and explanations.
   A-40.0 B-53.3 C-6.7 D-0 E-0

3. My teacher is fair when students misbehave.
   A-45.0 B-50.0 C-5.0 D-0 E-0

4. My teacher keeps me interested in my school work.
   A-27.3 B-31.8 C-27.3 D-13.6 E-0

5. My teacher does things to keep the students well-behaved.
   A-54.5 B-45.5 C-0 D-0 E-0

6. My teacher tells us why the things we are learning are important.
   A-36.4 B-45.5 C-9.1 D-9.0 E-0

7. My teacher explains things again if we don't understand.
   A-40.9 B-36.4 C-9.1 D-13.6 E-0

8. My teacher knows a lot about what is taught in class.
   A-50.0 B-50.0 C-0 D-0 E-0

9. My teacher enjoys teaching.
   A-91.7 B-8.3 C-0 D-0 E-0

10. My teacher teaches things in an order that makes sense.
    A-40.9 B-40.9 C-4.5 D-13.6 E-0

11. My teacher is usually well prepared for class.
    A-48.4 B-41.9 C-3.2 D-6.5 E-0

12. My teacher is friendly.
    A-50.0 B-50.0 C-0 D-0 E-0

13. My teacher grades assignments and test fairly.
    A-83.3 B-8.4 C-0 D-8.3 E-0

14. My teacher gives fair tests.
    A-33.3 B-58.3 C-8.3 D-0 E-0

15. My teacher tells me when I do good work.
    A-40.9 B-20.1 C-30.0 D-9.0 E-0